

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 05377 022310Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8648

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 5377

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: TALK WITH FOREIGN MINISTER

REFS: (A) STATE 190452 (B) PANAMA 5375

1. AFTER DELIVERING SECRETARY'S MESSAGE (REF A), I HAD LONG DISCUSSION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BOYD REGARDING THE NON-ALIGNED MEETING IN SRI LANKA (REPORTED REF. B). IN THE COURSE OF OUR TALK, I MENTIONED THE PUERTO RICO ISSUE AS ONE THAT WAS OF DEEP INTEREST FOR US. I TOLD THE MINISTER IT WAS CERTAIN THAT SOME OF THOSE ATTENDING THE SRI LANKA SESSIONS WOULD TRY, AS THEY HAVE BEFORE, TO MAKE THE FUTURE OF PUERTO RICO A TARGET FOR ATTACKS ON THE U.S. I NOTED THAT THE PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE HAVE REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED THEIR VIEWS ON THEIR FUTURE IN FREE ELECTIONS AND THAT THEY WERE SCHEDULED TO DO SO ONCE AGAIN THIS NOVEMBER. IN THE PAST WELL OVER NINETY-FIVE PERCENT OF PUERTO RICANS HAD EXPRESSED A CLEAR PREFERENCE EITHER FOR DIRECT STATEHOOD OR FOR SOME FORM OF A COMMONWEALTH STATUS WITH CONTINUED CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNITED STATES. I ALSO REMINDED THE MINISTER THAT THOSE WHO WERE PUSHING THIS ISSUE HARDEST IN INTERNATIONAL GATHERINGS WERE PEOPLE WHO DID NOT KNOW WHAT FREE ELCTIONS WERE AND DID NOT TRUST THEIR OWN PEOPLE TO USE THEM.

2. THE MINISTER SAID HE WAS TOTALLY OPPOSED TO THE CUBAN
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POSITION ON PUERTO RICO. HE HOPED THAT PANAMA COULD

AVOID ANY INVOLVEMENT IN DEBATE OF THIS ISSUE. HE SHOWED
ME A PARAGRAPH FROM A SPEECH HE IS WORKING ON FOR THE
SRI LANKA SESSION. ON PUERTO RICO, IT SAYS THAT THE
QUESTION OF INDEPENDENCE IS ONE FOR THE PUERTO RICANS
TO DECIDE. THE PATH TO INDEPENDENCE SHOULD REMAIN OPEN
IF THEY EVER FREELY CHOOSE TO USE IT. THAT, HE SAID,
IS ALL HE INTENDS TO SAY. HE THEN COMMENTED WRYLY THAT
HIS CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT MIGHT NOT EVEN WANT HIM TO SAY
THAT MUCH--SINCE IT MIGHT NOT BE TOO WELL RECEIVED BY
OTHER DELEGATIONS.
JORDEN

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Message Attributes

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